

Committee: **Scrutiny Committee for Education**

Date: 24 July 2003

Title: Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee for Education held at 10.00 am at Pelham House, St Andrews Lane, Lewes, East Sussex

Subject: Minutes

Attending: Barnes Field Garvican Kramer Livings McPherson Mrs Waite Whetstone

Mr J Taylor (C of E Diocese)
Mrs S Maynard (Parent Governor)

Lead Chief Officer's
representative

Peter Weston, Assistant Director of Education

Legal Adviser

Jonathan Ruddock-West, Assistant Director of Legal and Community Services

Financial Adviser

Greg Roberts, Education Finance Manager, Corporate Resources Directorate

Scrutiny Lead Officer

Peter Davidson

2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

2.1 RESOLVED - to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23 April 2003, subject to:

2.2 (i) the addition of Councillor McPherson's apologies for absence;

(ii) the addition to paragraph 39.8 of the words " given that the scoping review carried out by the former Community Services Scrutiny Committee had concluded that a review should be held in abeyance until the People's Network had been in place for a reasonable time, and given that the newly-appointed officer responsible for the library service was not yet in post"; and

(iii) the addition to paragraph 33.1 of the words "which indicated that the content of this Committee's minutes would be a matter for discussion by the Director of Legal and Community Services and the Chairman."

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3.1 Mr T Campbell (RC Diocese) and Mrs J La Coste (Parent Governor).

4. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

4.1 Councillor Barnes declared a potential non-prejudicial interest in item 8 below by virtue of his being Chairman of the Bexhill and Rother Primary Care Trust.

4.2 Councillor Mrs Waite declared a non-prejudicial interest in item 9 below by virtue of her being a member of the Chartered Institute of Librarians and Information Professionals.

5. NOTIFICATION OF URGENT MATTERS

5.1 The Chairman informed the Committee that he proposed to take as an urgent item of business a request to scrutinise the consultation exercise currently being undertaken in Hastings and Rother concerning provision for post-16 education, ie whether this should be provided through sixth forms or a sixth form tertiary college. He considered that the matter warranted the urgent attention of the Committee because the consultation was already in progress and any decision to scrutinise the process would need to be acted upon before the next scheduled meeting of the Committee.

5.2 The Chairman referred to a letter he had received from Councillor Mrs Waite expressing concern about the way in which the consultation was being carried out, in view of local concerns that decisions had already been taken about post-16 education in Hastings and Rother before the consultation had been properly concluded.

5.3 The Director of Education's representative informed the Committee that the consultation had currently reached the third stage of a seven stage process. The consultation was being led by the Learning and Skills Council; the local education authority had the status of a partner in this exercise. He suggested that the Committee would need to consider the most appropriate way to scrutinise a process which was outside the direct jurisdiction of the local education authority.

5.4 RESOLVED – to (1) give notice to the Cabinet of the Scrutiny Committee's intention to undertake some form of scrutiny of the process by which the current consultation on post-16 education provision in Hastings and Rother is being carried out;

(2) appoint a group of members of the Committee, comprising Mr Taylor, Mrs Maynard and one councillor-member (to be decided), to undertake the scrutiny;

(3) request the Director of Education to provide the above group of members with further information about the consultation and the local education authority's role in it to enable the group of members to consider the most appropriate scrutiny method; and

(4) invite representatives of the Learning and Skills Council to attend the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on 17 September.

6. REPORTS

6.1 Reports on the matters dealt with in the minutes below are contained in the minute book.

7. COUNCIL PLAN 2002/03 END OF YEAR MONITORING REPORT

7.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chief Executive.

7.2 The Director of Education's representative responded to a number of specific queries raised by members on particular items in the Plan.

7.3 RESOLVED – to (1) note the End of Year Progress Report;

(2) request the Director of Education to submit a report to the November meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on the target-setting methodology adopted by the Centre for British Teachers in relation to attainment at Key Stage 2; and

(3) request the Director of Education to circulate to members of the Scrutiny Committee for information extracts from the Education Development Plan concerning actions to improve pupil attainment at Key Stage 2.

8. DRUG AND ALCOHOL EDUCATION GUIDELINES AND SEX AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION GUIDELINES

8.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Education and welcomed to the meeting Chris Owen and Marilyn Stephens of the Personal and Social Health Education Team.

8.2 Although the report summarised the changes which had been made to the Guidelines since the Committee had considered them in October 2002, members expressed a wish to examine the revised documents and related material.

8.3 RESOLVED – to (1) note the developments outlined in the report; and

(2) request the Director of Education to send electronic copies of the Guidelines to members of the Scrutiny Committee and ensure that a copy of the Guidelines is deposited in the Members' Room, together with other material collated and updated as necessary in consultation with the Scrutiny Lead Officer.

9. SCRUTINY REVIEW OF SIX-TERM YEAR CONSULTATION - UPDATE

9.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chairman of the Project Board.

9.2 The Committee noted the progress of this Review and agreed that the final report of the Project Board should be presented to the Committee's meeting on 16 March 2004.

10. SCOPING REVIEW OF RETENTION, RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF SCHOOL GOVERNORS - UPDATE

10.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chairman of the Project Board.

10.2 The Committee noted the progress of this Review and agreed that the final report of the Project Board should be considered at the next meeting on 17 September 2003.

11. SCRUTINY OF LIBRARY SERVICES

11.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Legal and Community Services.

11.2 RESOLVED – (1) to recognise and fully accept the importance of rigorous and structured monitoring of the library standards which remain unmet;

(2) not to make a firm commitment to involve former members of the Scrutiny Committee for Community Services as a matter of course in future reviews and monitoring of aspects of the Library Service; and

(3) not to nominate a member to act specifically as a "champion" of Library Services.

12. SCRUTINY PROGRAMME 2003-04

12.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Education and Director of Legal and Community Services.

12.2 RESOLVED – to request the Scrutiny Lead Officer to report to the September meeting of the Committee with an evaluation of the feasibility of possible scrutiny reviews of the following:

- vulnerable children
- family learning
- PFI arrangements in relation to Peacehaven Community School

13. FORWARD PLAN

13.1 The Committee considered the Forward Plan for the period July to October 2003.

13.2 RESOLVED – to note the Plan and request the Directors of Education and Social Services to provide the Committee with further information about two of the items listed in the Plan, namely “Service Planning in East Sussex” and the “Children’s and Young People’s Strategic Plan”.